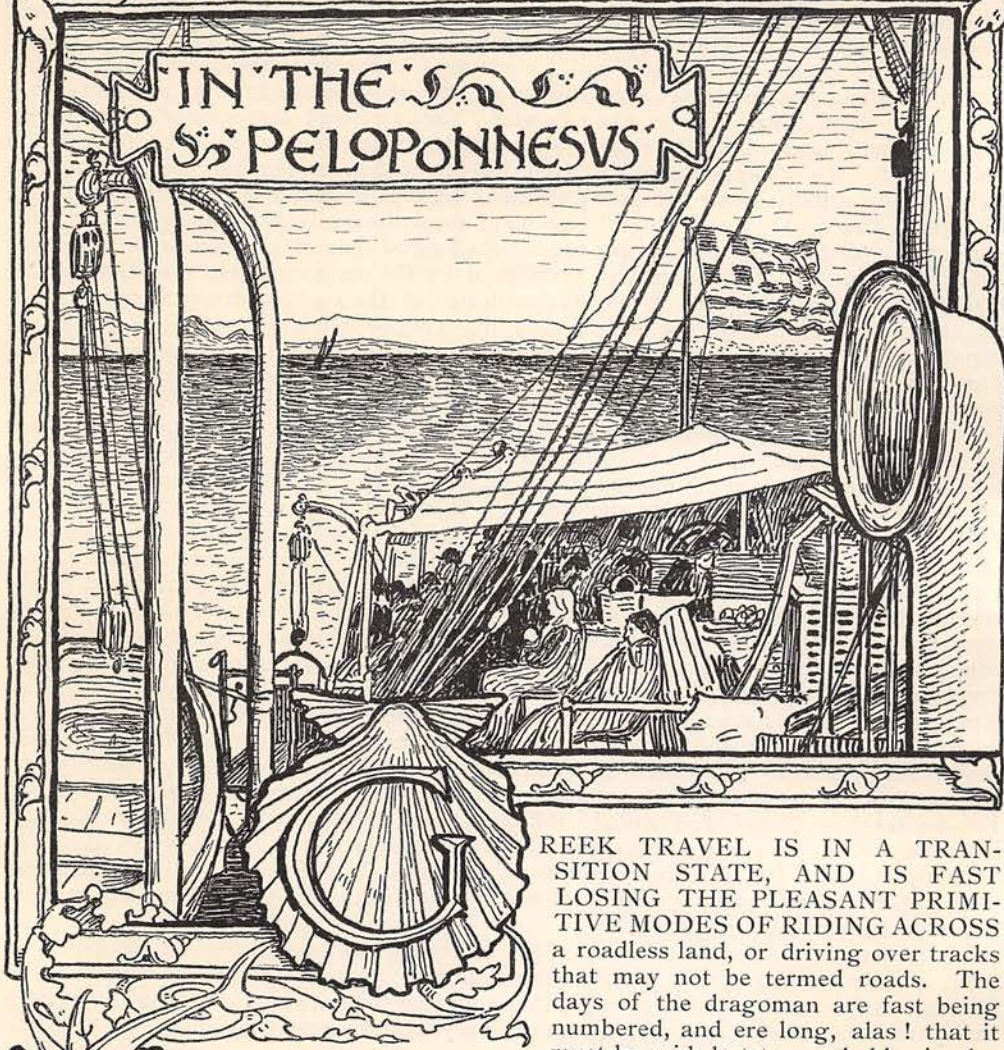


BY JAMES BAKER ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER CRANE

IN THE PELOPONNESVS



GREEK TRAVEL IS IN A TRANSITION STATE, AND IS FAST LOSING THE PLEASANT PRIMITIVE MODES OF RIDING ACROSS a roadless land, or driving over tracks that may not be termed roads. The days of the dragoman are fast being numbered, and ere long, alas! that it must be said, but too probably circular

railway tours will be established to all the principal points of interest in Greece.

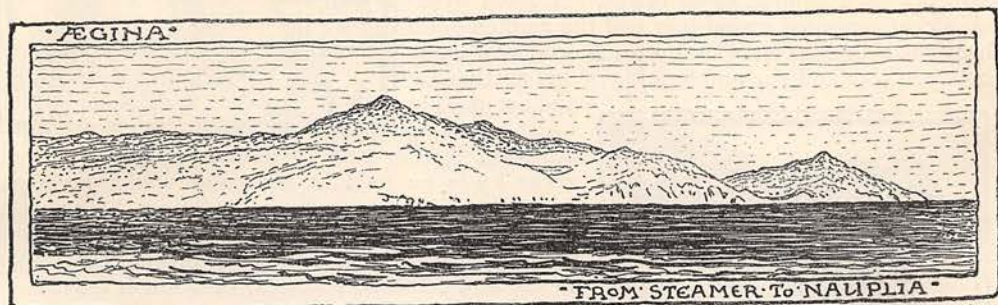
But not yet. There is still the charm of wild rough life. Mule-riding, and rough roadless driving, and life amidst a peasantry untouched by city taint, must still be enjoyed by those who would see Greece as she is; and although the rail now runs from Corinth to Nauplia, yet those who adopt this as their means of transit to Mykenæ and Tiryns lose half, nay, three-fourths, of the charm of a visit to these buried cities of a mythic past.

There is a pleasant compromise obtainable to those starting from Athens upon this journey, between riding or driving the entire distance, or wholly sacrificing the road and going by rail—a compromise that gives additional pleasure to the visit, and the preparatory rest of a glorious voyage amidst the isle-set Ægean Sea.

A cool fresh air was blowing in from Salamis ere the sun had yet climbed above Hymettus, to glint the Parthenon, as we drove

from Athens along the Piræus road to embark for Nauplia. The quay wall at the port was lined with pirogue-like boats of many a colour, and all draped with rugs and carpets of richly-blended hues. Into one of these we passed, to be pulled out to the little steamer that was already packed with human beings bent upon keeping Eastertide in their own homes. We soon steamed away out past the two little lighthouses and the tongue of land known as the site of the tomb of Themistocles. As we open up the little rocky isle off Salamis, half-a-dozen white-sailed boats are gently sailing into where the Persian boats lay when their king, awaiting on his rocky seat above them, their triumph, watched their defeat. We could well see as we sailed on the bit of a circle of rock from whence the whole strait could be seen; and very lovely now did it look just lit by the morning sun—the rippling blue sea and tiny wavelets, the distant hills in soft blue mist, and the nearer heights of that delicate grey, flecked by dark cloud-shadows.

We were soon nearing the island of Ægina, and looking out sharply for a glimpse of the famous temple of Athena, whose columns yet cap the heights beyond the town.



But our search for the pillared height was broken by a darting group of dolphins that were playing and leaping ahead of us, and we were glad for a little while to watch their gambols as their green and white bodies darted and rose and fell in the clear blue waters—waters from which one would not be surprised to see arise fair nereids or an aphrodite, for its crystal depths seemed a fitting home for beings of tenderness and love. The idea of Venus arising from the ocean is hardly to be grasped in northern seas, or in the deep purple, black lines of mid-ocean; but amid these Greek islands such a vision would seem but in harmony with the voluptuous nature of sea and isle and heaven. Here, as we neared Ægina, the reddish-brown rocky isles are seen floating in an emerald and purple-blue sea, that fringes them with strange colour, and then stretches away into the deepest blue. Away to the right were the snow-clad hills glowing pink in the sunlight.

As we sailed round the rocky yellow point of Ægina, with its little white lighthouse that the sun tinges with a pinkish hue, the whole broken-up steep shores of the Peloponnesus lay upon our right, and the straight channel ahead of us, excessively blue, is dotted with a swaying white lateen sail or two. We had caught ere reaching this point a glimpse of the pillars of Athena's temple, cleaving sharply the clear blue of the sky, and now we were watching the boats from the port pitch and leap in the sea, now a delicate green. The little town, so famous and powerful some 2,500 years ago, lay on the brown hill-side; the houses, white and square, and some yellow, hardly distinguishable from the yellow soil. A green circle of sloping heights now bright with spring foliage rose above them up to the rocky caps and peaks of varied shapes. We lay off the island long enough to watch the almost fierce activity of its boatmen, and to let our thoughts wander back into the days when Ægina was a power in the East, and her merchants traded far and wide; and the day of Salamis might have ended otherwise but for the bravery of her children. So crowded were the associations that swarmed into the mind that until now we had scarcely noticed the modern Greeks who so thickly swarmed on the deck of our steamer; but as we sailed away from this island we looked down from the bridge upon the strange and varied groups around us. The whole deck was occupied by people of every grade and most varied costume. Just beneath the bridge were crowded together a quantity of sheep, with long, merino-like hair; and looking after them was a shepherd or two in white petticoats and great hooded goat-skin coat. Other Greeks were seated about, wearing handkerchiefs

upon their heads, and vests and sashes of rival colours. One in white shirt-sleeves and spotless petticoats, wore a bright cardinal red sash, a vest that was dark grey in front, with blue pattern velvet, and the shoulder straps bound with yellow braiding. Another vest was of crimson velvet embroidered with yellow braiding. The women lay back upon the seats, their faces swathed in their coloured head-dresses, and many with the lower part of their face covered. One sailor perched upon the bulwarks formed a picturesque figure, with dark-red, half-fez, half-Scotch cap, a dark-blue shirt bound round the waist with a sea-green scarf, and bluish trousers. The shepherd had gone to sleep after attending to his sheep, and now lay back against some boxes, his great goat-skin coat wrapped round him and the peaked hood brought over his face. A dark-coloured vest came between this and the ample folds of his petticoats,

and around his waist was a dark-red leather belt of numerous pockets; one great knife he held in his hand whilst he slept, ready for any emergency; his lower limbs were bound round with semi-white, tight gaiters, and his feet were shod with the once bright red leather shoes, and coloured rosettes, now much faded.

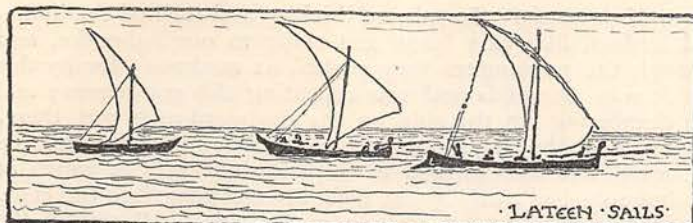
It was amid this group that we lunched, we heathen, amid the fasting Greeks, who looked on in silent wonderment at such a group in such a spot, only awaking to excitement and interest when a certain doctor of the party, who was a good amateur photographer, prepared to focus the table and the surrounding crowd; and few stranger photographs have ever been taken than this upon the Sefnos steamer just as we were running up to the rugged island of Hydra—a name that at once brings up the second labour of Hercules to the mind; but it was not here that the Hydra was slain, but at Nyli, not far from Argos, whither



we are wending amid the swamps of Lerna; and modern writers strive to prove that this labour was the useful work of draining the swamps and making them fruitful instead of death-dealing; and surely the aid of the firebrands of Iolaos is suggestive of such a work.

When we again ascended the bridge, a point of advantage luckily retained for us, as we shortly proved, we found we were between Hydra and the mainland, and just running up to the little white town that was lying between the grey and black rocks; a few trees round it, or rather amidst it, between the houses, but all around dry, and arid, and hot. Ahead of us the blue sea was landlocked by dotted rocky isles and rising sloping grey headlands, and far ahead beyond these are the misty blue hills, vague yet defined, one little tiny pyramid of pink now overtopping all. As we came nearer, the town (which we could now see was of some size) went up the ravine, the





creeping down on each side to the blue water's edge. An embattled wall ran round the town, and three or four martello-like towers were still standing and aided the wall-defence that crept up to the overhanging peaks above.

Our captain was a Hydriot, and so also was a lad of the ship's company who stood near us, and as we sailed away from the island the captain's family were at a window to greet him, and the lad borrowed our glasses to see his friends, who were waving to him from a balcony. The island is inhabited largely by Albanians, a population that seems to be the flower of Greece for daring and hardihood, either on

the mountain-side or upon the sea. Their goat-like surety and activity upon their mountains, and their cat-like activity and daring upon their boats and sailing ships, make them a formidable foe in border warfare, as they amply proved in the war of

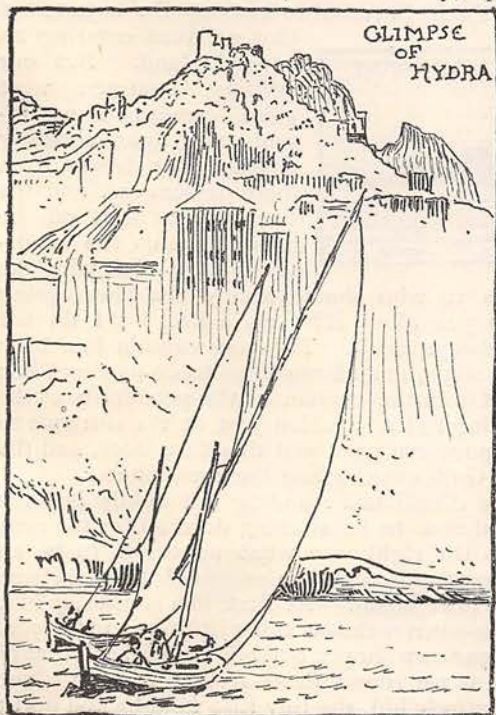


freedom. As to their fierceness we had an example of that ere the day was over. The fact that their island was never occupied by the Turks is a standing proof of their bravery.

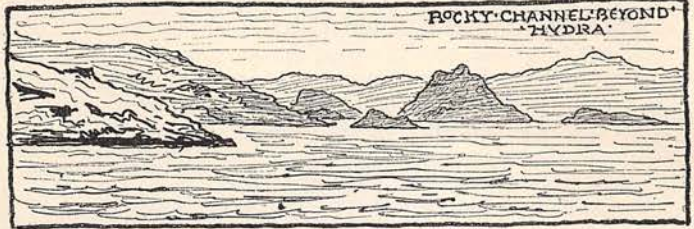
As we left Hydra, our outward path seemed blocked by curious rocky isles, with contorted irregular strata, covered on the south side by the grotesque form of the prickly pear. Peaked islets and bold bluffs formed a series of lava-locked bays, most blue and most beautiful; and far away, up

one of these bays, we saw the sun lighting up two boats' sails, of just the hues Ægeus watched for; yearning for the one and dreading to catch sight of the other when awaiting the return of his son Theseus. The intense contrast of the two sails, the one a dark blackish red, the other glittering white, both some miles away from us, was very striking, and told how from afar in this clear atmosphere the difference could be noted.

The great bold bluff ahead of us we found to be the island of Dhokos, and beyond this again we now sighted Spetsa. As we pass under the steep, precipitous, grey and reddish-brown cliffs of Dhokos, the sea is most strangely beautiful. The rock-brown, reflected in the sea upon which the sunlight is shining, forms a lovely, glittering, blue and amber sea: an effect of light that was extremely lovely. But our attention was reluctantly withdrawn from this wondrous effect, to watch two large sailors' fishing boats, that were just ahead and lying in our track. They each contained about eight men and seemed awaiting us, but we steamed on at full speed regardless of them; but as we neared them, the starboard boat, which was closest to



us, deftly hitched on as we sped onwards. In spite of the leap and rush of the boats, the fishermen, shoeless and hatless, like cats leapt and clung to our bulwarks, and scrambled on board. Through the passengers they rushed as madmen; for by this time the boat on the port-side was alongside and was repeating this manœuvre; and the fishermen in her were clambering up the side, as the starboard men met them, seized them by the throats, hair, limbs, anything that was catch-holdable; but the port-side men swarmed on board, and then ensued a desperate struggle in which at least one knife was drawn, but snatched away by the defender and flung into the boat, where it was left sticking in a plank instead of in a man's side. All amidst the passengers, who were hustled, and rushed here and there, the combatants fought on; some being nearly throttled, others losing a good deal of hair. After about six or seven minutes' fighting and shouting, some agreement seemed suddenly to arise, or the steamer slowing for the island stayed the battle; for the scrimmage ceased, and into the hands of the fighters were trusted the passengers who had to land at Spetsa. We doubted for some time what would come of this battle, it seemed so in earnest, and it proved how sixteen men armed in open boats could seize upon such a steamer as ours, even going ahead full speed; and the catlike swiftness and agility of the men was decidedly astounding.

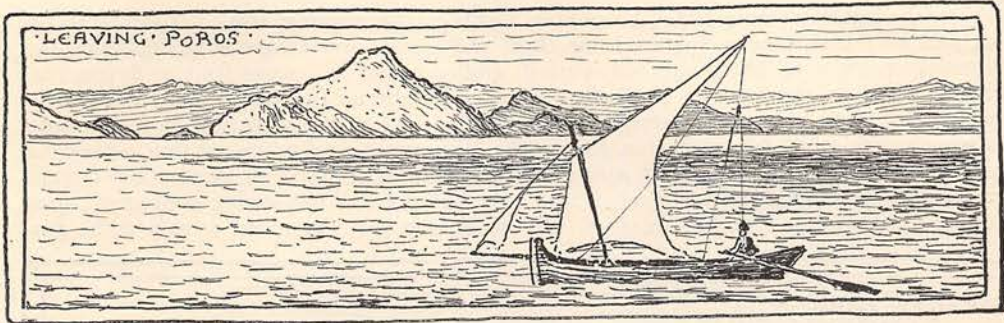


Close to Spetsa is the very strange island of Trekeri, lying a little way out eastward and seaward; it is like an enlarged example of the twin fortress of the Trosky in Bohemia; two great hills at each end of the island connected with a high-level platform-like strip of land. To balance these heights on the right or mainland side is the bold headland of Cape Aimilianos, and ahead is Spetsa, the whole forming a perfect picture of form and wondrous colour. The town of Spetsa is like Hydra as regards the houses, but not so lovely in situation. It straggles down the hillside to a low point, off which lie a ship or two; a round tower; a tiny group of dark cypresses end the island shore, and as we brought up, a cannon fired from the fort seemed to keep up the suggestion



that we were entering an enemy's land. But our fighting boatmen were calm enough now, intent only upon securing drachmæ or leptæ from their passengers, and the few minutes' wait off the island gave us the opportunity of a chat with the captain over the fight. It was simply as to who should secure the shore-going passengers we were told. "But why do you allow it?" we asked. "I do not allow it," replied the captain, "but they always do it. The port captain has been complained to frequently, but he takes no steps, and allows them to do as they like; and so I cannot prevent it." We also heard from the captain of the peculiarity of the climate of Spetsa, that it is never warm owing to its situation just at the entrance to the Gulf of Argos. The south wind is a pure sea wind and therefore cool, and the east wind blows down in a mistral from the Gulf, ever cooling the atmosphere.

The view aft as we left Spetsa, of Cape Aimilianos standing out boldly into the brilliant sea, was very grand, and we seemed now to be steering dead on for the near shore; but we suddenly turned sharply to the right into what appeared to be an uninhabited bay; but a white house or two peeps up, and then another little bay opens on the left, and we find we are steering into Port Kheli. At first this is entirely hid, and at its mouth are some peculiar, little water-worn rocks—a thing little seen in Greece, where the force of the water is not as around our own shores, and mighty sea sculpture of isolated rock and cavern is very rare. But as we round these fretted rocks we see what before, though close to us, had been entirely hid, the tiny safe land-locked port;



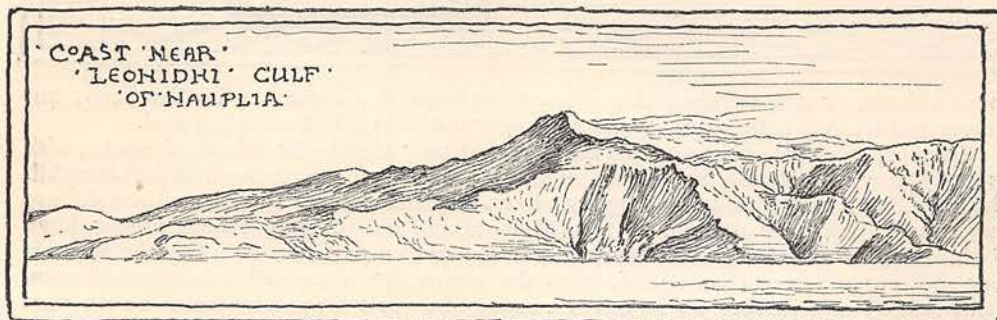
about a dozen or two houses and a dozen ships form the homes of its dwellers ; but a more picturesque little spot, or one so snugly hid, it would be hard to find.

From this port we again retraced our way, skirting closely the island of Spetsa with its low yellow rock shores, and then steamed across the mouth of the Gulf for Leonhidi. The sea smooth and glazed as a mighty mirror. The mountains as we near Leonhidi are very grand, rising tier above tier ; all soft in outline, and yet ridged and running down to the coast in green waves. As we enter the opening of the little bay the scene is very striking. Some thousand feet up the mountains is a small town perched upon a cliff ledge ; and further up inland is a castle-like rock topped by three towers that are now windmills. The town itself lies up this valley hid in richest vegetation ; but a little group of houses on the spit of land in the bay forms a little port, and on the rocks to our left is perched another village on the mountain slope. The little rock that formed a rough boat landing-stage, was crowded with an interesting group of friends waiting for our boat's arrival. Men and boys in picturesque dresses, and just behind groups of mules, and women in brilliant costume. The shouting and cries as we drew near were tremendous. The pretty boats of light pea-green crowded around us ; the men and lads in them, of swarthy faces and black piercing eyes, in white and blue linen shirts. Many of our passengers were children going home from school for Easter, and the groups of women and mules were friends come down from the mountains to receive them. And truly the scene was a lovely and strange one. Over all this hubbub and excitement towered the great hills, their lower rocks scored with rich red veins and grey cliffs. The sea, where not in shadows, was now a deep indigo, but where broken up by the light boats, of a lovely light hue. The vegetation in this lovely valley is richly luxuriant. No less than 400 gardens are here, and the cultivation, especially of oranges and pears, is carried to great perfection. Leonhidi pears are famous. Stretching up the valley were these rich gardens, and the houses were hid in the blossoming and fruit-bearing trees. The people of this district are a separate race—speak a separate dialect, "Tzakmen"—descendants of the Pelasgic race, according to some authorities, and if so, descendants of the builders of Mykenæ, and speaking the tongue, probably from their isolated position, fairly much as then spoken ; for as one sees, even where many races have mixed with the inhabitants, the same utensils and tools, and exactly the same ovens and bakers' shops as are proved to have been in use some 2,000 years ago, so it is not improbable that here, where a race has kept closely to itself, the same speech has held its sway for some 4000 years.

But our minds were brought back to present life by our boat swinging round and heading up the Gulf, leaving behind us the great rocks that come down from the high tableland above Leonhidi, like to some great monster roots of a gigantic tree, that were running down into the sea all green and moss-grown with time ; for the hills were clad with verdure.

Onward now we went up the Argolian Gulf, the shore steep, scarped, and indented ; little villages perched upon the platforms and spurs of the mountains ; the sloping hills running down, very varied in form and colour, and some points very effective when two or three windmills cap a peak ; the round towers of light yellow and dull red roofs ; the sails now furled, and the slight framework invisible in the still evening light. As the sun sinks behind the hills, the deep blue gulf becomes a shield of silver-grey, and far away stands out into this, the now ruddy cliffs of Spetsa and the grey hills of Dhokos. The horizon is bounded by a deep dark blue line and the delicate evening yellow light of the sky above. A soft purple haze swathes the near

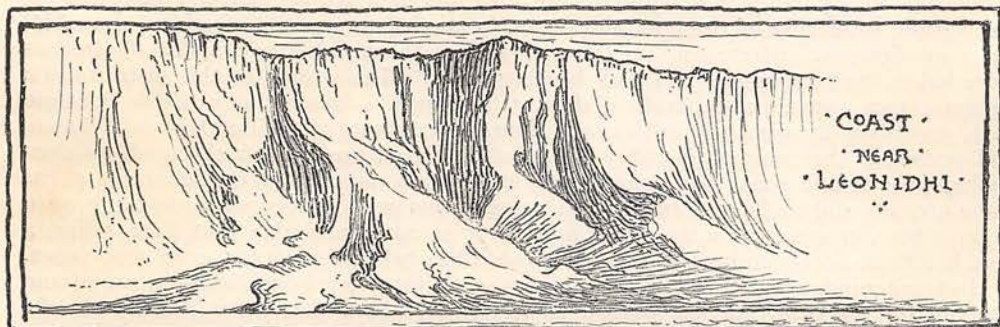
hills on the left, that now hide the yellow light of the sinking sun. The men in the fore part of the ship now clustered together, and sang low strange songs in a peculiar drone-like harmony. The songs only varied, and rose and fell, some four or five notes; the last notes were held on until they sounded much as the drone of distant bagpipes. But just as we were entering the last little port before steaming on for Nauplia we were summoned aft again to a dinner the dragoman had prepared that somewhat astonished us, and made us feel ashamed to be feasting amidst all the fasting Greeks around us. The study of wonderment, or nonchalance and increasing contempt, upon the faces around was full of interest, but made one feel the more uneasy to be par-



taking of the feast. The offer of some fruit to the children around seemed to put us in a somewhat less heathenish light with the parents, for this the little ones might eat.

Night fell as we were at dinner, and when we again ascended the bridge it was to see the dim soft hills lit but by the rounded star globes, that cast silvery waves upon the waters; and onward in the night we went, awakening the hill echoes by glees and songs of various nationalities, or listening to the low, chant-like songs of the Greeks beneath us, until we neared the shore at Nauplia. Along the coast were burning here and there flaming torches and fires, where fishermen were luring the cuttle-fish. A rocket rushed up as we lay to off Nauplia, and we were soon surrounded by boatmen all shouting and gesticulating, but hardly so fierce in their demonstrations as the Spetsa men; and ere long we were safely housed in some fairly clean rooms at the Hotel des Étrangers of Nauplia.

In the morning we were awakened at 4.30 by the bugle call; some of us had been



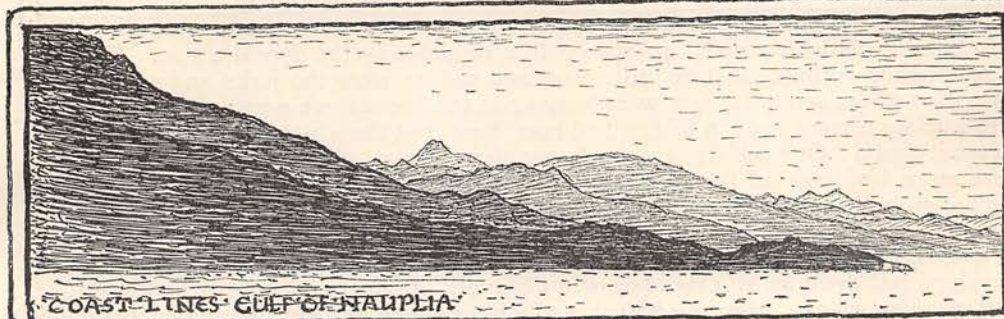
kept awake all night by the watchmen passing round every hour and crying out in musical tones, "Sentry, be awake."

The square outside the hotel is a picturesque spot; a line of graceful aromatic pepper trees gives a grateful shade to the east side, and some plane trees and a rich blue creeper flower add beauty to the scene. The domed mosque-like church with its little square tower is on one side of it, and above the old embattled fort led up to by the green terraced and brown walls. At the corner of the square is a little coffee-house with overhanging eaves, and one or two very weak and tiny trees that seem struggling to grow in the hot arid air.

From the quay the view is most lovely. Away over the blue gulf rises the wide line of hills, all lit by the early yellow sunlight; their dark yet airy caps topped by a

distant pure snow peak. In the centre of the gulf, that in full sunlight is of blue turquoise and in shadow *lapis lazuli* like colour, rises the picturesque little rock isle of Burzi, or Burchi, as it is pronounced.

We did not attempt to climb to either the fort of Itsch Kale or Palamidhi; the latter named after Palamedes, who was the son of Nauplios, who was the son of Poseidon; but before the sun gained fuller power mounted our carriages and drove away for our first halting-place, Tiryns. Here before us we had evidence to what an extent had reached this palace, or fortress. There was the watch-tower and outlook for watchman and warrior; whilst here were the home-rooms with hearth and altar, and simplest yet strangest of all, because it seemed so thoroughly to carry us back into pre-Homeric life, the very bath-room and mighty single-stone floor upon which the feet of Homer's heroes stood as they bathed and anointed themselves. There were yet traces of colour upon the fragments of walls that still stood; the passages and doorways to the very numerous rooms could be wandered amidst, whilst the mind almost refused to believe that here was the home, the birthplace, of Hercules, that to the shelter of these mighty walls came Bellerophon, and here



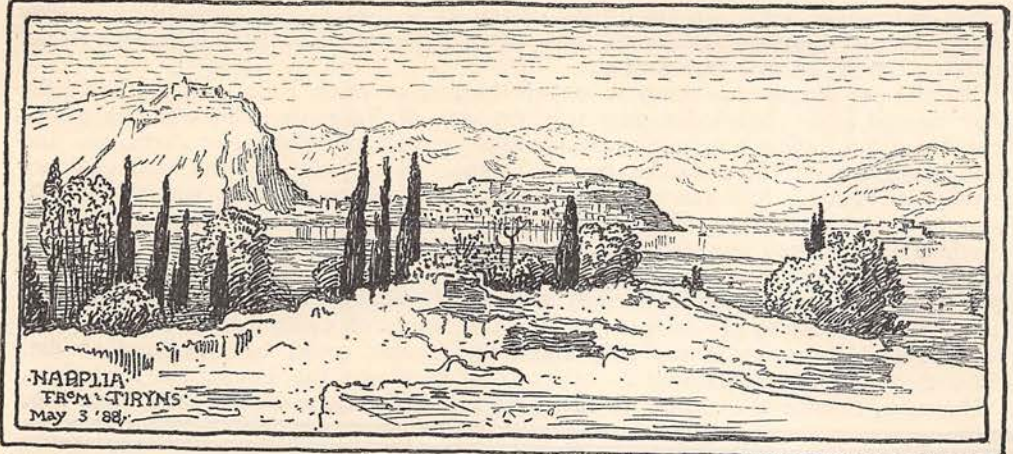
it was that he in whom the Immortals had bestowed beauty and strength inspired the love of Queen Anteia. Of the actual founding of Tiryns, Dr. Schliemann quotes Strabo, who speaks of its fortification (not foundation) by Protios. He employed the Cyclops, seven in number, who came from Lybia, and perhaps the caves about Nauplia, and so the work is called Cyclopean after them. As to the date of the destruction of this stronghold, Prof. Mahaffy and Dr. Schliemann both date it far back into the time of the Doric migration; that is, about 1,110 years before Christ, and not, as hitherto has been stated, after the Persian war, about 468 B.C.

The care with which the excavations have been carried on in and around these ruins is strangely illustrated by the fact that in the bath-room, in its place where it had actually been used, was found a portion of an earthenware tub made of thick terra-cotta; and here let Dr. Dorpfeld, Schliemann's co-worker, speak of its discovery. "Its form agreed pretty nearly with that of our bathing-tubs. It was furnished with a thick upper rim, and with strong handles on the sides, and it was painted within with spiral ornament." In fact it was one of the "well polished bathing-tubs often mentioned by Homer." And yet if the argument be good, and that Tiryns was destroyed at the date mentioned, this bathing-tub must have lain there for some 3,000 years, so carefully does the earth preserve records of the past for the patient worker who carefully knows how to set about discovering them.

The dimensions of the blocks of stones used in this fortress have often been written about; but yet their great size, many nine feet long, strikes one with wonder; and the perfectness and evenness with which they are piled and built one above the other is very remarkable.

At the east corner is a grand piece of this Cyclopean work—a great tower, led down to by a well-built avenue, the blocks employed being five feet long by eight feet high. At the entrance to this walled avenue stood the square pillars for the doorways, the holes in the pillars still sharply cut.

As we passed up through the narrow straggling roads of Argos, we saw the women in their eastern costume drawing water at the wells; a fair mountain stream was still coming down from the mountain side. But we soon left the little town behind us, and went out into the hot, "thirsty" indeed, plain, where the sun poured down in fiercest intensity. Onward we galloped, over a track that could not be called a road—down



into brook-beds with a rush, and then with a scramble up the opposite side. Ofttimes it seemed the springs must go, so violent and sudden were the jerks and rushes. At one point where some workers were busy upon the harvest we went with a rush down into a wider torrent bed; a bridge had been here, but the winter floods had long ago swept it away. Our vehicles survived even this without coming to grief, and we thus once more had crossed the Inachos. We seemed to be near the opposite mountains, but for more than an hour this rough rush and scramble lasted, and an attempt to write a note in a note-book made but straggling strokes from top to bottom of a page. But at length, without turning aside for the remnants of ruins of the Heræum, we ascended the slope and drew up at a farmhouse in Charvati—a word said to be from the Arabic, and meaning ruins. Here we halted, and with a Greek and our dragoman as guides, started off on foot for the climax to our day's interest—Mykenæ.

Across the fields, over a dry, stony way we went, the sun pouring down with such fierceness that even the spot of high interest ahead of us scarcely seemed to offer repayment for this hot walk; but not long did it last before we passed around the low spur of a stony hill, and suddenly turned between two mighty walls of grand and massive masonry. The sight of this splendid work, which but a moment before seemed to be naught but a waste, stony wilderness, was startling.

Up between this wide avenue (or, as Dr. Schliemann terms it, *dromos*, or "approach to,") we passed, lingering and looking with wonder at the perfectness of the building, up to the great doorway that formed the entrance to the treasure-house of Atreus. This avenue is literally a great cut into the hillside, and the great walls keep the hill from filling up the entrance. The mighty block over the doorway that stretches from side to side of the avenue is astounding in its dimensions; its actual measure is twenty-nine feet long by seventeen feet broad, and nearly four feet in thickness. The labour to place this block in position, over a doorway some eighteen feet in height, can only be marvelled at. Clinging to the stone in the avenue and about the doorway was a lovely rich creeper, with a large bell-like flower of a purple blue, that added great beauty to the rich brown stone. The interior of this vast treasure-house is best described as a great dome of conical or beehive shape. A fire of brushwood was lit to show us the walls and formation of the vault, and we saw the little inner dome that is scooped out of the rock and appears not finished, but the doorway is well finished; and here, as at the mighty entrance to the main dome, a triangular space has been left over the doorway, and the massive blocks of masonry above it form a triangle, thus throwing the weight above upon the solid masonry at the side, and not upon the single block that caps the doorway. A hole has been broken into the top of the greater beehive; and through this now the sun formed a great light yellow beam, that, with the red blaze of the flames, formed a weird effect among the figures that were moving or resting within the dark vault of past ages.

The interior of this great beehive was formerly cased with bronzed plates, and the nails which held these plates have been found, and their marks are visible in the stones, thus making it, like the chamber that was built for David, "the hall covered with the brazen plates."

From the cool darkness we came out again into the blazing, dazzling sun, and went round over the fields towards the citadel of Mykenæ. At one point, when we seemed we must be near it, for there was but a stony hill ahead of us and no outlet, we had to descend into a dip and climb up again a rounded summit. The heat made us grumble at this, but afterwards, upon reading Dr. Schliemann's work once more, we found that this very hillock, that added to our fatigue in the heat, is probably another treasure-house, and perchance a virgin one, yet unspoiled by mortal hand. But we passed unwittingly over this mound, and soon reached another stone avenue, leading down to a lesser treasure-house, but almost an exact facsimile of the greater one, with the same excellent walling, and a great stone over the doorway, surmounted by the same triangular aperture. The careful way in which these triangular or sharp-pointed arches are formed (as at Tiryns, only with more finished work) by the stones gradually overlapping each other until a point is reached, is very interesting.

We did not stay long within this treasury, that has been named the Treasury of Clytemnestra, but went on up the steep and acute slope until we stood in the cool shade under the mighty Cyclopean blocks that flank the approach to the Lions' Gate.

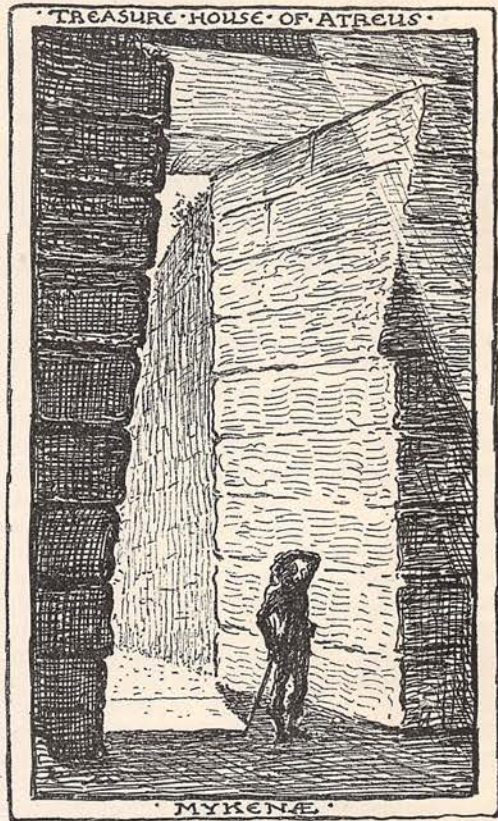
Here we could quietly sit in welcome shadow, and look up at the two figures that have made the name of the Lions' Gate at Mykenæ world-known. Their two lithe forms are carved out upon the triangular stone that fills the pointed space above the massive stone lintel of the gateway. Their hinder legs are low down upon the top of the lintel, and their fore paws resting upon a built pedestal or altar, upon which stands a narrow pillar that divides them. Their heads are gone; but Dr. Schliemann is of opinion that these were not of stone, but of bronze and gilded, placed so as to protrude and face the entrance. "The straight cuts and borings in the necks of the animals can leave no doubt as to this fact," he says. The capital of the pillar is worked with an ornamentation not met with elsewhere in Greece, and much conjecture has been

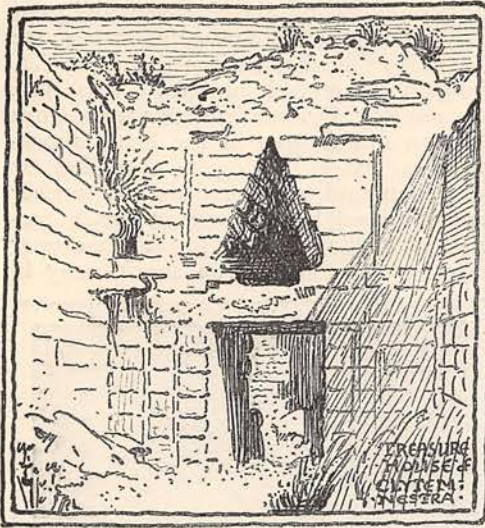
ventured upon the meaning of this pillar; but Schliemann concludes that it is a shrine of Apollo, and confirms his opinion by a reference to the *Electra* of Sophocles.

It was upon this spot that Orestes and his sister halted ere they entered the palace to avenge their father upon their lustful mother. Here in this narrow stone avenue, where the natural rock forms the base upon which on the left-hand side is built up the mighty Cyclopean wall, they stood, pondering on their mother's shame; and when Orestes is pressed to enter quickly, for "now Clytemnestra sits alone," Orestes halts still to adore "the shrines of all the ancestral gods who guard these gates," and his sister Electra in supplicating voice cries out, "O King Apollo, hear them graciously."

"Be thou the gracious helper of our plans,
And show to all men how the gods bestow
Their due rewards on all impiety."

As we passed onward and within the gate, all the old life of these oft-fancied mythic days seemed breathing around us; and we halted at the gateway to look back upon the natural scene that opened out from this narrow, wall-enclosed space. The





lovely uprising hills shut in the view, alternating with bright patches of harvest colour and grey stony tracts of barren hillside; clusters of trees were here and there, and far to the east rose a mountain, blue in the distance, whilst in the centre far away rose a glorious glittering snow-peak. Strange that this striking view should be left without mention by all the authors who wrote of the scenes enacted here, and some of whom, from their descriptions of town and meeting-place, seem to have visited the spot.

We turned now from it, and entered beneath the gate, looking down for the chariot-wheel ruts that we found not, for, as Dr. Schliemann aptly points out, the ascent is too steep for chariots, and probably here, as in the higher mountain strongholds of mediæval times, pack horses and mules, and not chariots, were used for

these upper citadels and palaces. Besides, it is only since Dr. Schliemann cleared the gateway that the true roadway has been laid bare.

Just within the gate on the left-hand side is a little hole—room it can hardly be called—which has evidently been a porter's or watchman's rest. He could not stand up or scarcely stretch himself within it, but it is a sheltering spot from torrent or tempest. The marks in the gateway for the bolts are still sharply distinct, and help to bring the daily life back to one. Passing onward from the gateway amid lines of walls and ruins, on the left rises the natural hill and an immense mass of giant walling, and beneath this runs round a circle of upright stones, and within this circle, destroying its level centre, are great excavations of considerable depth.

Around the circle the two parallel rows of upright slabs form a narrow avenue, around which a man may walk—there is hardly room for two abreast—and be hid from the circle within. Grooves are cut in these upright slabs, and it is soon apparent that something has been laid crosswise upon them, and from one or two cross slabs that are yet in position it is clear that the whole circle of double stones formed with these slabs a great stone bench around this agora or meeting-place.

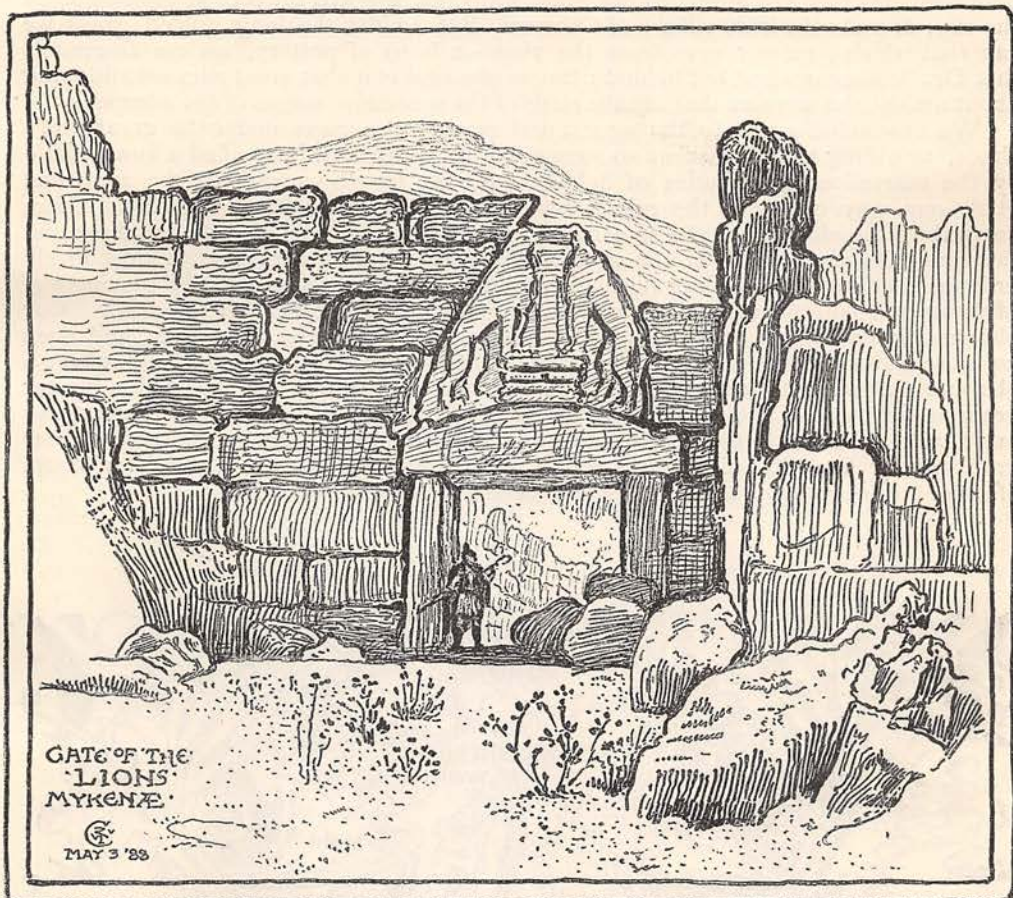
How strange it was to sit here in the intense stillness, with, as at Tiryns, but the hum of insects and chirp of birds, under the shadow of the mighty Cyclopean wall that at midday gave shade to the assembly; to feel the soft warm winds gently breathing and sighing around one, even in their warmth cooling, after the sun's great heat, and to dream for a while of who had peopled this scene in past ages—of Agamemnon, "King of men"; of his wife holding her sway though betraying her husband in his absence!

Here just in front of us must have stood Orestes when he returned to pour libations on his father's tomb; and there to the left, just beyond the circle of the agora, are yet standing the foundations of the building into which he entered to avenge that father.

Those graves in front of us that go so far down into the earth of to-day, were then not far deep beneath the then world's surface, and into them (if Dr. Schliemann's surmises be correct) were quickly huddled all those who, returning with Agamemnon, were slain by his guilty wife and Ægisthus.

That they were not denied royal honours in their burial was due to dread and fear of the gods. What these honours were can be gleaned by the marvellous amount of treasure found in these tombs. Diadems—five on each head in one tomb; crowns of gold of the most beautiful workmanship; cups and goblets of gold, some weighing four pounds in weight; bronze cauldrons, even as those "twenty gleaming cauldrons" proffered by Agamemnon to appease the wrathful Achilles; rings and seals, truthfully and artistically engraved—seals such as Orestes showed to Electra to confirm that he was indeed her brother returned again to their home. So faithfully and exactly does this treasure, found by the persistent, dogged energy of Dr. Schliemann, illustrate the life that had almost become to be considered myth. Working down into the earth

as he did, finding at various depths tombstones with nothing beneath them, most men would have desisted disheartened. But he knew he had not struck virgin soil, and so he kept on until, some thirty feet down, he lit upon, or rather accurately traced, these famous five tombs, with such masses of royal golden treasure. Not only were these royal ornaments found, but items that bring one back to the daily life of Homer's people—a lady's gold comb with teeth of bone; another of circular form, showing the fashion of holding the hair back from the forehead. The gold masks found on the faces showed the fashion of wearing the hair and beard, and that waxing the moustache is not a new custom invented by *beaux* of our own ages. Their arms were buried with the warriors. At the foot of one man fifteen swords were found, and in the same tomb a heap of pieces numbering nearly sixty. One ornament showed that then, as now, the cuttlefish was a frequenter of the Argos Gulf, for no less than



fifty-three gold cuttlefish were found in one tomb. The coloured glass tubes within glass tubes showed too that they were adepts in glass-work in prehistoric days. From those excavations before us came all this marvellous treasure, and here probably Euripides stood ere he wrote his plays upon Homeric themes, though he knew not but from vague tradition that beneath him lay Agamemnon and Cassandra and their companions, though perchance some of the tombstones that had been placed in successive eras to preserve that tradition were yet not hid beneath the debris of ages.

Sophocles, from his description, does not appear to have stood here, and yet even in his play of *Electra* we can trace out the action of Orestes coming to the Gate of Lions in the night; crossing in to his father's tomb before us, and then passing on to the palace, where, awaiting her retributive doom, was Clytemnestra.

It was a spot, beneath the gentle shade, that we longed to linger in, and fill the agora with Homeric forms, the principal men seated upon the stone slabs that formed

the bench running around it. But we had yet to climb up to the acropolis above, to get a view of the whole plain and surrounding country; and so we left the shadow and all the "shades of heroes" that had arisen to repeople the agora, and made our way up over great stone blocks all covered with soft silky brown grass, that hid the stones, and made climbing dangerous, until we reached a sort of level terrace. The soft silky grass we found was provided with sharp little sword-like blades that pierced through all clothing and pricked sharply. But our climb rewarded us by an interesting view, and from this acropolis must have looked out the watchmen for the fire-signal that told of Agamemnon's return.

The whole plain of Argos lay beneath us, and far away over it the town of Argos itself, with its stronghold of Larissa, the soft blue gulf stretching away from it, and beyond this the beautiful outline of the distant mountains. We could look down and note how far away had stretched the great walls that marked the former boundaries of the city, down to the little village of Charvati. But amidst the long golden grass we saw that which took our eyes from the view—a heap of pottery, useless fragments that Dr. Schliemann had left behind; but so plentiful is it that great piles are still lying about amidst the terraces that are the ruins of the successive stages of the acropolis.

We descended again to the agora, and rested once more under the great wall's shade, unwilling to quit a scene so strangely full of interest, intensified a hundredfold by the marvellous discoveries of Schliemann. At length we quitted the spot, and made our way out over the ruined walls and water conduits to the Lions' Gate, down the steep slope, past the so-called Treasure-house of Clytemnestra, and passing this time over the summit of the greater Treasure-house of Atreus, with most lovely brilliant-hued flowers studding the fields around us, we passed out of the precincts of Mykenæ and entered again into modern life at the little station of Charvati. Our pleasures in prehistoric scenes, and how intense had they been, were over, and soon we were walking along the little single line of railway to the tiny station. But here a pleasure that was patriarchal in its simplicity was granted us; for the station-master brought forth water, and poured it over our hands to refresh us. We could not speak our thanks, but we looked them, and his smiles showed that he understood our gratitude for his gift of cooling water in a thirsty land—a fit ending for hours of calm but intense joy amidst Homeric scenes.

